News, Gossip, and Innuendo from the
Western Pacific

Local Gossip

Some newsletter critics have requested a new slant so -- to the right . . .

ANNOUNCEMENT: Please contact the OEC front desk immediately (ext. 5886) if you want to go on the club field trip to the Micro Computer Show '84 at Ryutsu Center, May 26. Cost is $5.00 per person, which will go toward renting a bus and driver from Rec Services. [Any other costs, such as any admission charges or purchases at the show, are not included.] Please bring your payment to the next meeting so we can confirm reservations. Don't miss this opportunity to play high-tech tourist!

NEXT MEETING: May 9 (Wed.) at 1800, top floor of Barracks "C." NOTE: the time indicated in the Seahawk classified ad is wrong! Scheduled activities include a demonstration of the I.B.M. personal computer (and maybe a Kaypro) and the long-postponed club elections.

ELECTIONS: Elections will also be held at the next meeting. J.R. Lee, current president, has been so overwhelmed by the crushing weight of his office he is fleeing the country, and won't be attending the next meeting. [He offered some story about temporary duty out of country, but we know the real reason --] Club by-laws call for the election of a President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, and three trustees. Though not called for in the by-laws it would probably be a good idea to also elect a Newsletter editor. NONE of these positions require any computer knowledge or skill; interest in computers, and interest in seeing the club succeed, are the only requirements. Please make every effort to attend, and nominate or volunteer for a club office. No further postponements are possible --

LAST MEETING: Club President J.R. Lee, in a desperate attempt to save his sanity, tried to abdicate his position, but was cruelly ignored. He did indicate, however, that his six month term expired about six months ago. Several people pointed out that, if everyone present at the meeting came in May, there would easily be enough members for an election (nearly all the visitors at the meeting joined the club).
Lee and others then discussed the

forthcoming Micro Computer Show '84. If there is sufficient interest the club will rent a Rec Services bus for the last day of the show. The show is an interesting combination of commercial exhibits (aimed at wholesalers, distributors, etc.), industrial exhibits (see the pretty computer-operated welding machine!), and personal/hobbyist exhibits. In past years exhibitors have had hundreds of items for sale, frequently at very attractive prices. Even if you aren't interested in buying anything the show is an excellent opportunity to make contact with vendors, see what is being sold, collect business cards and advertisements, struggle to translate cards and advertisements -- [See announcement, above.]

Ronald K. Jones distributed ads for the Brother HR-5, a portable printer ideally suited for notebook computers. These are being sold at the Tandy Computer Center and other locations.

Lawrence Charters spent about an hour discussing the capabilities, interests, marketing strategies, and future prospects of the BIG THREE micro manufacturers: Apple, IBM, and Tandy. If there is sufficient interest, at a future meeting he will cover the DOZEN DWARFS: NEC, Atari, Kaypro, Commodore, Epson, Zenith, Osborne, Coleco, etc.

NEWSLETTER CORRECTION: George Cooper, not the ficticious Chuck Underwood, demonstrated his Heathkit H-100 computer at the March meeting. Gommennasai (bow). Gommennasai (bow). Gommennasai (bow).

NEC SUPERMICRO FOUND: As mentioned at the April meeting, NEC's Macintosh-like machine mentioned in the last newsletter is now on sale. The PC-100 machine is an 8086 based, MSDOS machine with a full-color 720 x 512 bit-map display. Since it is MSDOS based it should be quite popular, and the graphics are fantastic. Unfortunately it is definitely a Japanese machine; even with the mouse-based cursor, pull-down menus, and other "ease of use" features, it requires a reading knowledge of Japanese, starting with the price: ¥756,000.

REVISED CLUB CONTEST: If you are the first to bring a working Apple Macintosh to a computer club meeting the Yokosuka Computer Club will give you a free subscription to its outstanding, informative, well written, and modest newsletter. If you are already a member maybe we'll make you the editor! Whatever it takes . . .

Non-Local Gossip

ZENITH OFFER: Government Employees Association, Inc. (P.O. Box 2405, Arlington, VA 22202) has increased their membership fee to $40, as of Jan. 1. It appears they have been flooded with applications in order to take advantage of the Zenith computer offer, and are trying to recover some of the cost of the paperwork.

GEA has also greatly increased the variety of systems offered. Originally only two machines were offered, the ZFG-121-32 (two 5.25" disk drives, built-in 12" green screen, lots of other stuff, $1,799), and the ZWG-121-32 (same as above but just one floppy disk drive and one 10 megabyte winchester drive, $2,799). They have added a low-profile, color capable ZF-111-22 (128K, 2 disks, $1,799 with separate green monitor, $1,809 with amber monitor, or $2,059 with RGB color monitor) and a low-profile, color capable ZW-111-32 (192K, one floppy disk drive, one 10 megabyte winchester, $2,799 with separate green monitor, $2,809 with amber monitor, or $3,059 with RGB color monitor).

There still are some problems involved in getting these systems to Japan. Shipping weight for even the smallest systems is 97 pounds, far in excess of the U.S. Mail maximum. George Cooper's H-100 is virtually identical to the low-profile ZF-111, and he expresses doubt it could be mailed even if broken down into separate packages. (He also doubted he would <u>want</u> to mail a computer.) At present the two most reasonable possibilities appear to be shipping the machine air freight (and paying customs, handling, etc., fees at Narita) or paying the Navy Exchange a fee to act as a special order shipping agent. Any other suggestions would be eagerly appreciated.

APPLE IIc RELEASED: As predicted Apple announced the IIc on April 24. The notebook sized computer will be promoted through a $20 million ad campaign, which will probably cause a severe drop in IIe sales. *Japan Times*, after suffering severe criticism for garbling high-tech news articles, found a solution: their news article on the IIc was stripped of all specifics, including the price. Usually unrealiable sources say that, with monitor, the IIc will run $1,550. Apple is working on an 80x24 flat panel display, for release later this year, which would make the IIc a very powerful <u>portable</u> computer.

SUPER APPLE SCRAPPED: A planned Apple IIx, with one megabyte of memory and 16-bit capability, was scrapped recently. The machine was to use a modified version of the 65C02 chip which would not be available until 1985.

OSBORNE REBORN: Its debt reconciliation plan approved, Osborne was at its usual West Coast Computer Fair booth, all smiles. An Osborne-1 now lists for $1,295, and an Executive for $1995.

MORE WCCF: The 9th West Coast Computer Fair, the oldest exposition devoted to micros, drew 45,000. Prentice-Hall, the new show producer, wants to move out of the tacky Brooks Hall-Civic Center Auditorium into the Moscone Center, but San Francisco won't rent the Center unless an event sells a minimum number of hotel rooms. Apple's booth at the Fair featured an eleven foot high, fully functional Macintosh.

GOOD COMMODORE NEWS: Orange Micro has started selling the Grappler CD printer interface, a clever box which allows a Commodore 64 to use Epson, NEC, C. Itoh, and many other brands of printers. The interface also features print screen features, screen rotation features, character conversions, etc. For more info write: Orange Micro, 1400 N. Lakeview Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807.

O.K. COMMODORE NEWS: At the Hannover Fair Commodore displayed the Commodore 16 (approx. $100), the Commodore 264 ($300), an unnamed 16-bit UNIX-oriented desk top (no price offered), and a transportable IBM PC clone with 256K (no name, price).

ROTTEN COMMODORE NEWS: So many stockholders, dealers, distributors, and computer owners are ticked off at Commodore that The Coordinating Committee for Commodore Law Suits has been incorporated in New York.

INTERESTING STATISTIC: A recent survey of computer owners (where buy, what buy, etc.) asked this question: "Do you use a disk drive?" Yes -- 36%. No -- 58%. Don't know or aren't sure -- 6%.

FRANKLIN'S NEW CLONE: Franklin, battered by Apple lawsuits, will soon introduce an IBM PC clone called The Key. The name apparently comes from the ability to easily reprogram the machine's keys.

TERRIBLE PUN: Capitol Records, uncomfortable in the shrinking record market, is now selling "Platinum" disks -- the same disk will work on anything from a single-sided, single-density machine to a double-sided "quad" density machine.

Dealers appear to like the idea since it reduces inventory costs -- all they have to carry is one brand and type of disk. The disks will run around $55 per box.

AT&T RUMOR: In order to gain experience with the retail and distribution market AT&T may soon start selling an IBM PC clone manufactured by Olivetti. The computer will be sold through Computerland.

TANDY TAKES IT BACK: Tandy's sales have steadily been going up 'for the last twenty years, but the price of its stock has been dropping. With no long term debt and a huge cash reserve Tandy decided to invest in the best stock deal available: it is buying ten million shares of its own stock, roughly 10% of all outstanding shares.

ADA NEWS: If you are interested in Ada, the DOD's new "standard" language, you might consider getting a subscription to "Ada Data." Averaging twelve photocopied pages, the newsletter comes out monthly, and a year's subscription is just $185. (That is not a misprint.)

UNIX NEWS: If Ada doesn't appeal to you, "Unique," a UNIX newsletter, is available for $52 ($28 for hobbyists). The eight page newsletter is also issued monthly.

FREEBIES: For those of you with modest budgets, try "Chips Ahoy," a small computer newsletter produced by NARDAC Norfolk. The April issue contained an excellent overview of the Zenith Z-100 operating system, plus reviews of several software packages, the Eagle 1600, and lots of gossip. For more info write: Commanding Officer, Naval Regional Data Automation Center, Norfolk, VA 23511.

The Army publishes another newsletter, "C^{2}MUG Bulletin," centered around command and control applications for microcomputers. Most of their software is designed for the Apple II. Write: Chief, CENCOM, SDSD, Attn: DRSEL-FL-SDSD (C2MUG), Ft. Levenworth, KS 66027.

MORE MAGAZINE STUFF: Sextant (address in last issue) has a very nice article in their March/April issue on the Heath/Zenith 100 and possible problems it might have running IBM PC software. One advertiser is promoting a utility which "retokenizes" IBM BASIC to run on the H/Z-100.

COLECO ADAM PRAISED: Both the April 23 Infoworld and the April Creative Computing had kind words for Coleco's Adam computer. They had lots of unkind words, too, but concluded it performed a useful function for a modest price. If you are interested in the Adam (advertised in the Exchange catalog) try and get a copy of one of these magazines.

NEW SANNO COMPUTER STORE: Corton Computer Systems opened a store in the New Sanno Hotel on April 27. Among other things they sell the excellent Columbia Data Systems IBM PC clone.

Newsletter Notes

FIRST CONTRIBUTION: George Cooper contributed two files for the newsletter, on an H-100 floppy disk. The newsletter's spiffy file transfer program could LOOK at the files -- but refused to transfer them. Though the files were on just one side of the diskette, both sides had been formatted, and the transfer utility could not decode the directory addresses. We'll try again next time.

NAME WANTED: The newsletter still needs a name. Not even unkind ones have been suggested -- doesn't anyone read this rag? Also, someone with a dot-matrix printer should get busy and design a spiffy club/newsletter logo.

CONTRIBUTE FOR FREE Send club newsletter contributions, announcements, want ads, threatening letters, etc., to:

L.I. Charters
USNH Box 65-1561
FPO 98765

Write, in the upper right hand corner, "MPS," and put your FULL return address on the envelope. Postage is free.

FORMATS ACCEPTED: Newsletter contributions can consist of photocopy-ready text or disk files. Disk files should be in ASCII on soft-sectored single-sided 5.25" disks using one of the following formats: Access, DEC VT 180, Epson QX-10, Heath/Zenith Z-89 or 90, HP-125, IBM CP/M-86 or PCDOS, Kaypro II, Morrow, NEC PC-8000, Osborne, Otrona, Sanyo 1100, Superbrain, Televideo, TRS-80 Model I, III, or 4, and Xerox 820 and 820 II. All disks will be returned at the next scheduled meeting or mailed back if you are really desperate.

Hints

CP/M BOMB: Under certain conditions you can recover from CP/M errors through the use of a "null" program. First, type in:

    SAVE 0 OOPS.COM

Then, the next time your program (WordStar, for example) blows up, just type in, from the >A prompt, "OOPS," and you'll return from where you left off.

Want Ads

WANTED: Cray-1S, any condition. Will pay up to $1000; more if software included. Contact editor.